



Make Family Time an Active Time

Target Audience

Parents and caregivers

Behavior Objectives

Adults who participate in this activity will be able to:

- Identify three ways to move for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week, including being physically active with their family.
- Identify at least two actions to choose foods and eat in a healthy way, every day.

Lesson Overview



20-MINUTE ACTIVITY!

Allow extra time if there are more than 10 participants.

Optional: Play the Power Panther music as parents gather.

- As an activity opener, parents make some quick hand movements to show how physically active they are. Then they have fun by moving to the beat of the Power Panther music. This activity helps explore reasons why being physically active is important.



- Parents work with partners to come up with solutions to the challenges of being more physically active every day.
- Parents identify at least one action they will do in the next week to be more physically active with their family. Each parent receives the *Make Family Time an Active Time* brochure and writes down his or her planned actions to share with family members.
- Using the MyPyramid mini-poster, “Steps to a Healthier You,” parents discuss ways to fit smart food choices into a healthy eating plan.
- At the end of the session, parents are reminded to take steps to make being physically active and eating healthfully a part of their daily habits.

Materials

- **Download the Power Panther instrumental music to a CD.** Arrange to play it at the beginning of the session and as part of the starting activity. You will also need the music for the opening activity, either with the lyrics or an instrumental version. *Optional:* print out the lyrics. Both versions and the lyrics are available at: www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/collect_kids_3-2.html
- **Make name tags. Print out the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ round stickers** to decorate the name tags. www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/Collection/collect_kids_2.html
- **Hang the *Make Family Time an Active Time* poster.**
Obtain it in advance from:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/tools_posters.html
- **Provide copies of the *Make Family Time an Active Time* brochure** and the *MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You* **mini-poster** which is included in these materials. Order the brochure in advance from:
www.ntis.gov/usda/orderfns.aspx
Or download it from the web at:
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/Files/balance_brochure.pdf
- **Bring pencils and sheets of paper** for each parent to use.
- For a bilingual or Spanish-language session, you can order Spanish versions of the *Make Family Time an Active Time* poster and brochure. To order:
www.ntis.gov/usda/orderfns.aspx



Background Information for Leaders

Use this information to guide your learning activities with parents. It is meant as background for you.

Being physically active is simply moving your body, not just being involved in a sport. Doing everyday activities, such as climbing stairs, cleaning the house, pushing a stroller, or dancing are good ways to be physically active.

What are the benefits of being physically active? It is fun, it makes you feel better, and it has important health benefits. Being physically active may promote a longer and healthier life in many ways. Regular physical activity may help relieve the stresses of everyday life, promote better sleep, promote a healthy body weight, and help people feel good. Being physically active strengthens and maintains bones, muscles, and joints. Moving enough builds endurance and enhances flexibility and posture. Regular physical activity lowers chances for heart disease, colon cancer, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Any physical activity that is done regularly is fine. If physical activities are enjoyable, they are more likely to be repeated regularly. Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days, preferably daily. It is okay to do those 30 or more minutes all at once, or spread them out in shorter 10-minute segments during the day. Moderate activity includes walking briskly, gardening, dancing, and bicycling (less than 10 miles an hour).

Parents play an important role in helping their children make active living an everyday habit. Children learn by watching. When parents make physical activity a regular part of their daily lives, they are good role models for their children. To help parents and kids move more, parents can: 1) set a good example by planning active ways to have fun with children, 2) play, rather than watch TV, more often together, 3) make active play safe, perhaps by creating a safe area for play at home, and 4) plan several activities each month where all the family is physically active together. Kids need at least 60 minutes every day, or most every day.



Becoming a healthier you isn't just about being physically active. It is also about eating in a healthful way. Your food choices are important to maintaining your health. Making smart choices from every food group is the best way to give your body the

Information for Leaders (continued)

balanced nutrition it needs. Eat a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. But make sure to stay within your daily calorie needs. A healthy eating plan is one that: 1) emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and foods made from milk; 2) includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and 3) is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars. Know the limits on fats and sugars to help you stay within your daily calorie needs. For more information, go to: www.mypyramid.gov.



For more about physical activity and healthful eating, refer to the Background Information for Leaders in the *Balancing Your Day With Food and Play Power Plan*. The MyPyramid web site offers helpful everyday tips on being physically active. Go to: www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity.html. This web site also has a place for individuals to set active living goals and to keep track of how physically active they really are.

Teaching Activities

Optional: Set a lively tone as parents gather and fill out their name tags, by playing the Power Panther song.

1. Start by having everyone stand up. Then have them talk about how physically active they think they are.

— **Ask** them:

- Cross your arms ... if you mostly sit during the day, at work, at home, or somewhere else.
- Shake your hands ... if you think you move enough during the day.
- Wave your arms wildly ... if your day is full of a lot of physical activity.

— **Point out:** Adults are advised to fit in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Kids need more. They need at least 60 minutes a day. Walking quickly, gardening, or dancing are examples of moderate activity.

Teaching Activities (continued)



—**Say:** Clap your hands ... if you think moving more than you do now would be good for you. Now with that “applause for being on the move,” it is time to get moving!

2. While the adults are all still standing, have fun by being physically active together:

- Explain** that being physically active does not mean you have to participate in sports. Any kind of moving around is good, including dancing or moving to music.
- Turn up** the Power Panther music for “If You Wanna Be Like the Power Panther.” Lead (or ask someone else to lead) the group in some easy but active moves to the Power Panther song. They might step in place, do a line-dance, walk around the room, swing their arms, or just move to the music in any way they would like. *Option:* if you would like to talk to them as the music plays, use the instrumental version. *Note:* “Power Panther is Here” is a shorter song and does not give as much time for parents to move.

—**Talk about** their “moves.” **Ask:**

- How did it feel to move a little in our time together today? (Responses might include: fun, energizing, relaxing, helps relieve stress.)
- Could you still talk while you were moving? Could you sing with the music?

—**Point out:** the “talk-sing test” is a good way to see if you are getting the right level of a workout.

If you can talk while you move, it is probably a good pace for you; if you can sing while you move, you may need to move faster or harder; and if you are too breathless to talk while you move, slow down.

- Why is dancing a good way to be active? **Talk briefly** about the benefits from physical activity. **Point out** that being physically active helps you control body weight by balancing the calories you take in as food with the calories you use each day.
- Could dancing be fun as part of your own family time? How? **Point out:** dancing can be as simple as just moving to the music on the radio at home.
- Reinforce:** Physical activity does not need to be a sport. It all matters, even when you move for just 10 minutes at a time at a moderate-intensity level.

3. **Explore** their personal barriers to physical activity.

- Acknowledge** the challenges they face when trying to be more active in their everyday life.
- Give** everyone a piece of paper and a pencil. **Have them write** their biggest challenge to being physically active.

Teaching Activities (continued)

- **Encourage** them to find someone with the same challenge. Together have them brainstorm two or three ways to overcome the challenge(s). Remind them that being physically active, even in 10-minute segments, adds up.
- **Share** both the barriers and solutions as a group. Along with the barriers, offer some sample solutions:
 - “*Too tired when I get home*” (Solution: Make your lunch or break time active; take a 10-minute walk.)
 - “*No time — too many other things to do*” (Solution: Be more active in the everyday things you do; use the stairs instead of the elevator or park further away and walk.)
 - “*Nobody to be active with*” (Solution: Plan fun ways to be active with your family; play with your kids or walk the dog.)

4. Distribute the *Make Family Time an Active Time* brochure. Use it to help parents plan some actions they might take to be more physically active themselves and with their family.

- **Ask:** During this next week, what could you do to move a little more every day? What could you do with your family to be more active?
- **Point out** the four tips in the brochure to make active family time easy:
 - Plan active fun time for your family several times a month.
 - Set a good example by making a regular time to be active for yourself.
 - Move more and sit less. Less TV time means more time for active play.
 - Make play safe. Set up a safe place at home for kids to be active.
- **Explain:** The brochure *Make Family Time an Active Time* has a place to list some things that parents could do with their family to be physically active today. It also has a few ideas for family fun to start them thinking.
- **Encourage** parents to commit to at least one action they will take. Then have them write it down. The brochure is meant to be taken home.
- **Reinforce** by referring to the *Make Family Time an Active Time* poster and by saying: When parents make physical activity a routine habit on most days, chances are their children will learn to do so, too.



Teaching Activities... (continued)

5. Use the **MyPyramid handout** *Steps to a Healthier You*.

- **Discuss:** Your food choices are also important to maintaining your health. Making smart choices from every food group is the best way to give your body the nutrition it needs.
- **Talk About:** A healthy eating plan is one that: 1) emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and foods made from milk; 2) includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; 3) is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars; and 4) balances food and physical activity.
- **Acknowledge** the challenges we face when trying to eat in healthy ways in our everyday life.
- **Have the parents read aloud the amounts of food shown on the** *Steps to a Healthier You* MyPyramid mini-poster, for 2,000 calories.
- **Discuss:**
 - What challenges do you face in eating a variety of foods?
 - What actions could you take to improve your food choices?
 - How could you plan to have healthier foods handy to eat?

Now that you know some fun and easy ways to be more physically active and eat healthfully, you can take steps to make these habits part of your daily life.

Talk to Parents One-on-One...

If you have time, here is an individualized approach you might want to use.

Often talking with parents one-on-one allows for more personalized advice. Discuss information of interest to them, including what steps they can take.

1. **Find out** what parents do, and want to know, about making physical activity and healthy food choices a part of their everyday life. Ask:
 - How would you rate yourself: “move a lot,” “sit a lot,” or “somewhere in between”? Do you think you get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days?

Talk to Parents One-on-One (continued)

- What often gets in the way of being physically active? Or what makes it easy for you to be active?
- What could you or your family do to move more and do active things you enjoy?
- What could you do to make healthier food choices a part of your daily life?

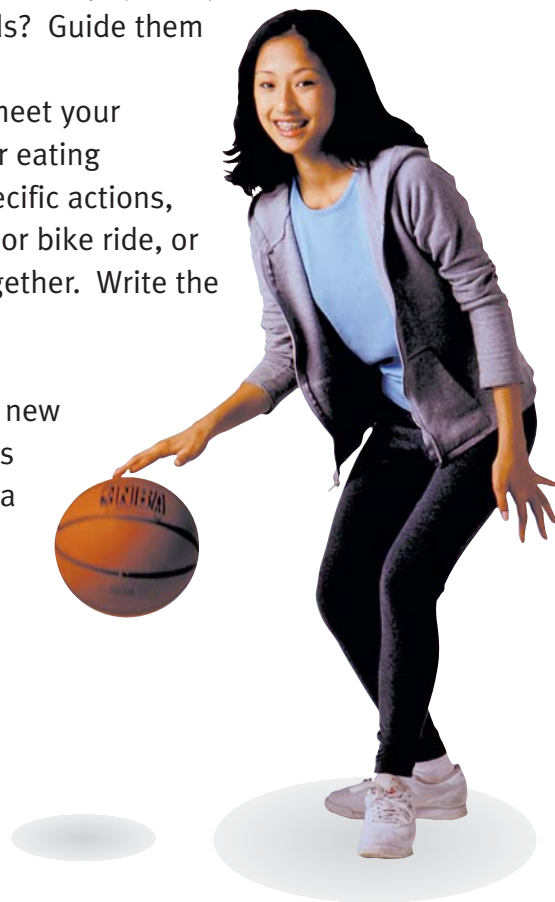
2. Share information related to what parents want to know.

- Go over the messages in the *Make Family Time an Active Time* brochure. Remind them that MyPyramid is a guide for good eating. Focus on what parents said they would like to learn about being more physically active or eating healthier.
- Reinforce the importance of setting an example for their children by moving more and sitting less. Point out that being active does not just mean jogging or playing a sport. They can do active things as part of daily living, such as taking the stairs instead of using the elevator. Even 10 minutes at a time is a good way to fit in 30 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

3. Help parents set realistic goals and steps for moving more and eating better. Ask:

- What goals could you set to be more physically active or choose healthier foods? Guide them so their goals are realistic.
- What actions can you take to meet your goal(s) for being more active or eating better? Help them choose specific actions, such as going on a family hike or bike ride, or raking or mowing the grass together. Write the actions on the brochure.

4. Encourage parents to make these new actions a habit. Each action moves you closer to a healthier you, and a healthier family.



At-Home Activities

As you talk with parents, suggest these activities.

- **Plan Your Moves...** Suggest that parents and kids make a simple Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ activity calendar on paper to post on the refrigerator. The kids can decorate it with Power Panther clip art. Then together they can use it to plan and keep track of family activities that get everyone moving. The *Make Family Time an Active Time* brochure has some great ideas. For a sense of accomplishment, they can put an Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ sticker on each date that they had some active family fun.

Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ clip art for round stickers is available on-line.

To view and download:

www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/Collection/collect_kids_2.html

The Make Family Time an Active Time brochure is available on-line.

To view and download:

www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/Files/family_time_brochure.pdf

Community Activities

- **Volunteer...On the Move!** Encourage parents to involve their families in a neighborhood or community project that gets everyone moving. Consider planting and caring for a community garden, participating in a beautification or clean-up project (such as adopt-a-highway or park), or gathering canned foods for a local food pantry. Walking the dog or doing yard work for an older neighbor or relative will be much appreciated. If parents work with a volunteer team for a community project, they can recognize each volunteer (adults and kids) with an Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ round sticker.

Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ clip art for round stickers is available on-line.

To view and download:

www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/Collection/collect_kids_2.html

Useful Resources

- **Additional Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Resources:**
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard
- **Additional Team Nutrition Resources:**
www.fns.usda.gov/tn
- **Additional Federal Government sources:**
General and specific nutrition information is available from:
www.nutrition.gov
- **The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion/USDA**
Find out about the MyPyramid Food Guidance System:
www.mypyramid.gov
- **The Food and Nutrition Information Center/USDA**
Child Nutrition and Health Web sites:
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/ooooo8.html
- **The Centers for Disease Control and Health Promotion/DHHS**
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity/HHS:
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm

Share your success stories with the Food and Nutrition Service by sending news clippings, photos, and event descriptions to your Regional USDA Food and Nutrition Service Office. For a directory of locations: www.fns.usda.gov/cga/Contacts/FieldOffices/default.htm